

Some Long-Vacation Hours Redeem'd.

THE
CHRISTIAN
Examiner.

PART I.

With an APPENDIX about
Notions and Opinions.

By T. Byfield, M. D.

The Second Edition.

*Examine your selves, — prove your own selves. —
What! know ye not your own selves. — 2 Cor. 13. 5.*

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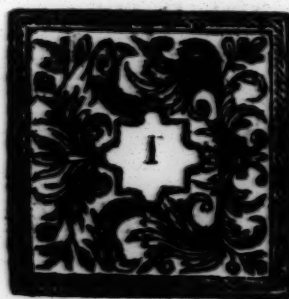
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3.





Introduction.



THE Plentiful Conveniencies in this outward World, cast such a *Splendor* on the *Natural Man*, that they are apt to hurry us into a *Transport* after the Possession of them.

And when an *Interest* in them is gain'd, it gives a great *Byass* to the *Soul*, and a secret turn of *Inclination* to what is represented as advantageous or delightful.

A 2 .

Hence

Hence arises a strong Impression on *Man's Nature*, to seek for *Good*: But, the Corruption of the same *Nature* is such, that it makes every thing about it seem *good*. Whereby it comes to pass, that many run an un-satisfied course of *Life*, thro' divers changes of *Things*, seemingly good; and most choose the lesser good, for the better, and very often down right Evil for Good.

Thus, very many now a-days, by improving the Fall'n-State instead of getting out of it, dwell in the midst of false Lights and false Appearances, rais'd by that great *Inchanter*, the *Prince of Darkness*, and are sweetly held in the *Serpentine Embraces* of False Lovers, as in Nets and Bands — bound in Chains of Darkness — Yet hurried by the *Powers of Darkness* they know not how, nor why, nor whither.

Such poor *Souls* are very little *Philosophers*, and less *Christians*.

Nevertheless, Mens Understandings commonly lead 'em as readily to believe that their *Souls* are *immortal*, as that they have any *Existence* at all.

And

And tho' many be not so wise as to distinguish aright between their *Souls* and their *Bodies*, or tell what kind of *Thing* that is, that they commonly call the *Soul*: Yet they are strongly inclin'd to believe that some part of 'em shall survive the other: And all *Nations* have consented in this *Belief*.

The *Souls* of some *Men* constantly exercising themselves about Bodily and Material things, and conversing only with what is sensible, are apt to acquire such deep Stamps of Material *Phantasms* to themselves, that they can hardly imagine their own Being to be any other, than Material — and so become Earthly and Sensual — tho' it be inconsistent with their Nature.

But there are *other Men* who have so well meditated the *Powers* and *Operations* of their own *Souls*, and so sufficiently abstracted 'em by *Contemplation*; that they can by clear and evident proofs, fetcht from their own *Experience*, know, that their *Souls* are both *immaterial* and *immortal*, and of a *Divine Original*.

Let us then consider a Soul —

Not

Not such an one as is immers'd into the Body, having contracted unreasonable *Desires* and *Passions* after the *Muck* and *Pollutions* of this *World* —

But, such an one, as hath cast away these, and as little as may be, communicates with the *Body* —

For such a One will sufficiently manifest that all *Vice* is unnatural to the *Soul*, and something learn'd from abroad: And that the best *Wisdom* — and all *Vertues* lodge in a purged *Soul*, as being allyed to it.

If therefore such a *Soul* shall reflect, how shall it not appear to it self to be of such a kind of Nature, as Divine?

For *Wisdom* and true *Vertue* being *Divine emanations*, can never enter into any unhallowed and mortal thing.

It must needs therefore be *Divine*, seeing it is fill'd with a *Divine Nature*, by its *Consanguinity*.

Whoever then amongst us is *such a One*, differs but little in his *Soul*, from an *Angelical Essence*; and that little is from
from

from his present inhabitation in a Body —

Happy were it, if every Man were of this raised Temper.

But the Vulgar sort of Men beholding the Souls of the Generality so Worldly, Sensual and Deform'd with Vice and Wick- edness, they cannot think of the Soul as Im-mortal and Divine. And thro' want of knowledge, cannot judge of things, as they are in their own naked *Essences*, with- out regard to what extra-essentially ad- heres.

Forasmuch then as the *Spirit* of a *Man* is vastly different from the Body in which it dwells — And there is no greater *Mystery* in Nature, than the *Union* betwixt the Soul and Body.

That a Spirit shou'd be so tied and linked to a piece of well figur'd Earth, that while that remains enliven'd by the *Air* in *Respiration*, and by proper means kept in a due Temper, it cannot by any Art or Power free it self —

What so much a-kin are a Mind and a piece of Earth, a *Clod* and a *Thought*,
that

that they shou'd be thus affixed to one another?

If we consider wherein consists the Being of a *Body*, and wherein that of a *Soul*, and then compare them, the matter will be clear.

But I shall here give the *Body* the slip —

And as for the *Being* of our *Souls*, if we reflect upon our selves, we shall find that all our *knowledge* of them comes to this, that we are Beings conscious to our selves of several kinds of *Thoughts*.

By our outward Senses we apprehend Bodily things, and discourse of 'em in the Sphere of Imagination, and in the *Sublime Powers*, we apprehend things that never pass thro' the Channels of *Sense*.

But that which makes many persuade themselves, that there is so much difficulty in knowing what their Soul is — 'Tis that they never raise their thoughts beyond sensible things, and that they are so accustomed to consider nothing but by *imagination*, which is a particular manner of thinking on material things, that whatsoever is not *imaginable*

ginable seems to them not *intelligible* — so that according to them, there is nothing in the *Understanding*, which was not first in the *Sense* — Yet it is certain that the *Ideas* of *God* and of the *Soul* never were —

The outward *Senses* assure us of nothing but their *Objects*. But illuminated *Reason* dictates, that all our *Sublime Ideas* ought to have some grounds of *Truth*.

What! shou'd concern my *Soul* to cause it to be so busie in *thoughts* about divers things without my self, when I observe nothing in 'em, to render 'em *Superiour* to me — rather dependencies on the inferiour part of my *Nature*; so that I make no *great account* of 'em.

For I cou'd find no *Idea* of a Being among 'em more perfect than my own — Especially since I have learn'd to *think* and *depend* on some Being more *perfect* than I, and also am made to know evidently 'tis of the most perfect *Nature*.

Surely I shall not appear in the Eyes of judicious Persons herein to be *very vain* —

For more than so, I was followed into a
B deep

deep *Retirement* within my self, where I perceiv'd that my *Soul* with all its *Powers* and *Capacities* was put into me by *God*, whose *glorious Perfections* so enlarg'd and fill'd 'em, that there were no *Ideas* form'd or impress'd — Yet I came to know on whom I depended, and from whom I had gotten all that I had —

Thus I have followed on to know *God*, and have learn't to value my *self* by my *Soul*, and not by my *Body*, I have also attain'd to know, that I am a *Substance*, whose *Essence* or *Nature* hath need of no certain place, nor depends on any material thing. — So that this *Me*, to wit, *My Soul*, is wholly distinct from the *Body*; and altho' that were not, it wou'd not therefore cease to be what it is.

There is a manifest distinction between the *Soul* and the *Body*, and an Evident *Supremacy* and *Dominion*, which the *Soul* hath.

Nevertheless 'tis necessary, for the *Preservation* of our *Bodies*, that our *Souls* shou'd be acquainted with 'em: And indeed the *Body* is so contriv'd, and so united to the *Soul*, that it might have a speedy access at all times.

The

The *Soul* apart from the *Body*, is an Act of Life, invifible, indivifible, all *Vital*:—*Life* in its *Effence* and *Subftance*, that it can never dye.

It has fuch a power of *Life*, that all workings of *Life* lie in it.

God created *Man* to be Immortal, and made him to be an *Image* of his own Eternity. *Wifdom* 2. 23.

The *Body* is a dead Lump of Earth, made up of many Parts, one without another.

Now if we confider thefe Two apart, in the Difference and Contrariety of their Natures, who wou'd imagine, that thefe Two cou'd be united, *fo*, as to become *One Perfon*, and live one *Life*.

Yet fo it is, *One Perfon* fubfifts in both *Parts*; or, both *Parts* fubfift together in *One Perfon*, and by that *Unity* of *Perfon*, *mutually*, One in another.

The *Soul* receives into it felf all *Impreffions* made upon the *Body*, and is fenfible of them.

The *Body* receives the Motions of the *Soul*, and is mov'd with the Sense of them; both jointly concur, and meet in every Act.

Yet, 'tis the *Soul* alone that can form Designs, and draw up a Plot of Means answerable thereto, and *Pass* it into a free *Vote*, from its own *Consenting Powers* — And all the while use his *Body* (notwithstanding the reluctancy of *its Nature*) only as an *Instrument* to serve his *Will* and *Pleasure*.

Wheresoever then the *Higher Powers* prevail not; but are vanquish'd by the impetuousness of sensual *Affections* and inordinate *Passions*, it must happen to 'em thro' their own neglect — for even here 'twill be granted that the *Soul* can, by acting upon it self, draw forth some *latent Energy* to enable it to appease all those Seditions and Mutinies, and bring under those *Rebellious Motions* that arise from the *Animal Powers*, and so Tame the *outward Man*.

It is generally agreed, that there are some more noble *Powers* in the *Soul*, than those by which it accommodates it self to the *Body*, and so converseth with *External Things*.

Here

Here some Persons observing no proportion between their *intellectual Powers*, and external *Objects*, and mindless of all their *own Notions* from innate *Ideas*, suck in eagerly such variety of sensible *Objects*, and therewith such a confused Knowledge of External Things, as both confound and debauch the Soul.

And in this case if you attend on the Voice of others, be cautious in your listening; lest you are put upon with *Speculations* gather'd by the *Senses*, which will only entangle your mind with many contradictions and clamorous *Disputes*; which the divided *Tongues* of the World wou'd pass upon you instead of Truth and true Knowledge.

I think no one does better than *He* that continues to employ his Life's time in cultivating his Soul, and advancing as far as he can in the Knowledge of Truth.

There is nothing I know more sweet and innocent than to accustom the Mind to nourish it self with *Truth*, therefore I receive nothing for *true*, but what I evidently know in the *Gospel*, and admit nothing more into my *Judgment*, but what so clearly and distinctly

finctly presents it self to my *Mind*, that I can have no reason to doubt but that 'tis the *Divine Power* of the *Holy Spirit*.

This will prevent false Reasoning.

For the Act of *Reason* by which some believe a thing, is different from that, whereby we know that we believe: For the *one* is often without the *other*.

I must confess, I value much those soft *Suggestions*, and pleasant *Insinuations*, which have crept into my *Soul* without the *Consent* of my *Reason*.

Nevertheless I know that long *Exercises*, frequent and deep reading the *Holy Scriptures*, and often reiterated *Meditations*, are necessary to accustom us to live on things *invisible*.

I feel a secret earnest desire in me to learn to distinguish *Truth* from *Falshood*; and to see clearly into my *own Soul*, that I may pass thro' this *Life* with *assurance* and *Divine Pleasure*.

I am therefore very cautious how I follow other *Men's Opinions* in search after
Truth

Truth, which is hard to be discover'd, knowing withall that *plurality* of *Voices* is no sure *proof*.

I reverence *Divinity*, and pretend to *Heaven* as much as any man, — But having learnt as a most certain *Truth*, that the way to it, is no less *open* to the most *Ignorant*, than to the most *Learned*; and that those *Revealed Truths*, which lead thither, are beyond *our Understanding*.

I durst not submit to the weakness of my *Reason*: But thought, that to undertake to *examine them*, and to *succeed* in it, requir'd some extraordinary *Assistance* from *Heaven*, and somewhat more than *Man*.

There is a *Divine* and *Spiritual Sense* belonging to the *Spirit of Man*, which only is able to converse *internally* with the *Life* and *Soul* of *Divine Truth*, as *mixing* and *uniting* it self with it; while vulgar minds behold only the *Body* and outside of the *Soul*, which makes 'em to deny that very *Truth*, which they seem to entertain. *The World thro' Wisdom knows not God*.

The great *Disputers* of this *World* are too full of *Nice* and empty *Speculations*, to
know

know *Him*, who is only to be discern'd by a pacate, humble, and self-denying *Mind*.

Christianity is a knowledge taught by God — A *Light* that descends from *Heaven*, which only is able to guide and conduct the *Souls* of *Men* to *Heaven*, from whence it comes.

The *Principle* of *Christian Religion* is an *influx* from God upon the *minds* of good *Men*.

And this is the great *Design* and *Plot* of the *Gospel*, to open and unfold to us the true way of *recourse* to God.

A Contrivance for the *uniting* the *Souls* of *Men* to *Him*, and the deriving a participation of God to *Men*, to bring in *Everlasting Righteousness*; and to establish the true *Tabernacle* of God in the *Spirits* of *Men*.

Herein consists the main pre-eminence, which the *Gospel* hath above the *Law*; in that, it so clearly unfolds the *Way* and *Method* of *uniting* human Nature to Divinity.

The *Glory* of the *Deity*, and *Salvation* of
Men

Men are not allayed by their *Union* one with another, but both *exalted* together in the most transcendent way — in that *Divine Love* and *Bounty* are the Supreme Rulers in Heaven and Earth.

We are taught that the mild and gentle *Breathings* of the *Divine Spirit* are moving up and down in the World to produce *Life*, and to revive and quicken the *Souls of Men* into a feeling Sense of a *Blessed Immortality*.

This is that *Almighty Spirit*, that will, if comply'd with, *Teach us all things*, even the hidden *things* of *God* — And mortify all the Lusts of rebellious *Flesh* — And *Seal* us up to the day of *Redemption*. But the *Holy Spirit* of *Discipline* removes far from *Thoughts* that are without *Understanding*, *Wisdom* 1. 5.

Now, I hope, we are in some measure qualified to take the *Holy Bible* into our Hands, and with great *Reverence* let us look up to the *Father of Lights* to direct and bless the labour of our *Minds*. For none, but the Soul enlight'ned from above, can judge aright of *Heavenly Doctrines*.



S E C T. I.

HOW came the *Scriptures*? By the *Inspiration* of the *Holy Ghost*.

How are the *Scriptures* to be *known* and *understood*? But by the *Inspiration* of the same *Blessed Spirit*.

That *Mind*, which is not touch't with an *inward Sense* of the *Gospel Mysteries*, cannot estimate the true *Worth* and *Power* of 'em.

But when *Divine Wisdom* once displays their *Excellencies* and *Glories* in *renewed, purified Souls*; they are entertained there with the greatest *Love* and *Delight*.

Therefore untill the *Blessed Spirit* of *Truth* comes in *Power*, and sweetly insinuates the *Light* of *Divine Knowledge* into our *Understandings*,

standings, we have both the *opening* and *hiding* at once of the *Divine Truth* offered to us.

For the *Letter* is, as the *Lattices* in the *Canticles*, thro' which *Jesus Christ* looks forth; They *darken* as well as *discover*.

Thus while *Light* and *Darkness* are mingled, all things appear *various*, and *variously* disturb the *Minds of Men*, unto irreconcilable *Divisions* and *Enmities*.

Men exalt their own *Darkness* as *Divine Light*, while they find *some* undistinguish'd glimmerings of *Light* in their *Darkness*.

Others dispute and fight against these *Men*, because *Darkness* is mingled with their *Light*.

Thus every where, there wants the gentle *Refiner*, the *Blessed Spirit of Love*, to take the rude *Oar*, the *Heart of Man*, into his *Hand* and *Furnace*; that *He* may with his *care*, and *skill* and *Fire* separate the *Gold* from the *Dross*; so as not to loose the *smallest grain*, tho' mixt with the greatest quantity of *Earth*.

We are not able to behold *Truth* in its own *native beauty* and *lustre*, while our *Reason* hath contracted such an *intimacy* and *familiarity* with our *senses*, which spread a dark vail of *mortality* upon all the *Faculties* of our *Souls*.

For since Man's *Fall* from God, the inward virtue and vigour of *Reason* is so much abated, that those *Principles* which were first engraven upon Man's Heart with an *Almighty Finger*, are now, as the Characters of some ancient *Monuments*, not clear and legible.

Therefore, because the *Truth* of *Natural Inscription* is almost worn out; the *Blessed God* hath provided the *Truth* of *Divine Revelation*, which discovers the way of our *Return* to *God*, from whom we are *fallen*. —

And this *Truth*, with the *Effects* and *Productions* of it in the *Minds* of *Men*, the *Holy Scriptures* are wont to set forth under the Name of *Grace*, as proceeding meerly from the free Bounty and over-flowings of the *Divine Love*.

God, out of the *infinite riches* of his compassions to Mankind, is pleas'd to unbosom
his

his *Secrets*, and bring to *Light, Life* and *Immortality*, by Revealing his *Son*, (who lay in his Bosom from all Eternity) to reach us his *Will*, and declare *His Mind* to us.

If we come well prepar'd to look into *God's holy Book*, we shall behold *Light* breaking forth, like the Eye-lids of the *Morning*, spreading its Wings over the *Horizon* of our *Souls*, to guide into the way of *Peace*.——

We shall discern the *Spirit of Life* entering into our *Hearts*, there *Revealing* the *Things*, that *Eye* hath not seen, and *Ear* not heard, and which have not enter'd into the *Heart* of Man.

The *Blessed Spirit* then is both the *Principle* of the *External Revelation*, as having Inspir'd the *Scriptures*, which foreshew this *Glory*—And of the *Internal Revelation* also, to *Enlighten* blind Minds, that wou'd otherwise never be able to see afar off.

Therefore call'd the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*, by which the Eyes of the Understanding are *enlightened* to know the *Hope* of that Calling—and the *Riches* of the *Glory* of his inheritance among the *Saints*.

But,

But, this *Internal Discovery* is made by the *mediation* and *intervenieney* of the *External*: Therefore having that before our *Eyes*, We are to apply our *Minds* to the *Study* and *Consideration* of it: And in that way to expect the *Free Illumination* of the *Holy Spirit*.

The Dispensation of the *Gospel* is *God's Power* unto *Salvation*: The *Seal*, by which He impresses his *Image*: The *Glass*, thro' which His *Glory* shines to the changing of *Souls* into the same likeness.

We have it Proclaim'd from *Heaven*, that *Power* belongeth to *God*, *Psal. 62. 11.* *God* hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that *Power* belongeth unto *God*.

O Lord! I have heard thy Speech and was afraid:
O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years:

*In the midst of the years make known——in
wrath remember Mercy —— God came ——
The holy One —— His Glory cover'd the
Heavens, and the Earth was full of his
Praise —— And His brightness was as the
Light —— And there was the hiding of his
Power, Habak. Ch. 3.*

Jesus

Jesus Christ is said by the Word of his *Power* to uphold all things; He beareth upon his Bosom all his own Births: And here only with an immediate *Repose* do all Hearts find Rest.

Is not the *Word* of *God* the immortal *Seed*? Are not Souls begotten by that *Word* to be the first *Fruits* of his Creatures? Is it not the Mould or Print, by which *Divine Impressions* are put upon the Soul? The Instrument, by which *He* Sanctifies.

Are not the exceeding great and precious *Promises* the Conveyancers of the *Divine Nature*?

And what can be the means to mollify and melt the Obdurate Heart of *Man*, to overcome it into the Love of *God*, to transform it into the *Image* of *Christ*: But the Gospel Discovery of *God's* own gracious and *Holy Nature*.

When the *Blessed Spirit* brings in *Gospel Truths* in their natural living Principle into the Heart, then we *Live*, and the *Word* lives in us: The *Heart* and the *Word* are quicken'd together.

The

The *One* was in a dead frame; the *Other* lay in a dead Letter: But now, Both do *Live* together, and agree with each other.

The Sense of the *Soul*, is the Sense of the *Word*: And the *Sense* of the *Word* is the *Sense* of the *Soul*: They both mean the same Thing — They fall in with each other; They Dwell together in Wisdom and Spiritual understanding: There is but one Spirit between *Them*: What *One* says, the *Other* does.

This is *Regeneration*, to make our *Hearts* thus to agree with the *Word*, by casting them into the *Mould* of the Gospel.

These happy *Births* feel a *Divine Liberty* within their *Souls* unto the *Father* of *Spirits*, and possess a noble *Sphere* of Intellectual Enjoyments.

Where the *Mystery* of *Christ* is opened, there is the *Unveiling* of *God*, that *He* may be seen in the *Light* of His own *Essential* and *Eternal Glories*, in his own proper and sweet *Form* of *Love* — *unmixt, unlimited* —

Thus *He* appears in the *Face* and *Person*

son of Christ, who is the *Godhead* in its *Essential* and *Eternal Image* — and *who* comes in the *Spirit* of the *Gospel*, full of *Grace* or *Love*, and *Truth*.

This *Glorious Appearance* is the *Proper Idea* of the *Human Spirit*, and its most inward and inseparable *Principle*.

The *Eternal Spirit* is the inward *Former* and *Workman* of the impressed *Likeness*.

Therefore among *Christians*, who enjoy the *Benefit* of the *Gospel-Revelation*, in which *Men* may behold themselves, as One may his *Natural Face* in a *Glass*; How highly shou'd this *Self-knowledge* be *Priz'd*, and how fully attain'd?

The *Gospel* discovers, at the same time, the ugly deformities of a *Man's Soul*, and the *Means* of attaining a true *Spiritual Comeliness*.

It is, it self the *Instrument* of *Impressing* the *Divine Image* and *Glory* upon *Men's Spirits*.

What a due *Temperament*, what *Spiritual*
D

tual Delight and Benefit do we receive from the good impressions of Living Religion, by which we both please *God* and profit our selves?

For hereby we get inward acquaintance with our *Blessed Lord*, the quickening Influences of *His Spirit*, and a Spiritual Hunger after the *Heavenly* hidden *Manna*, and the Fruits of the *Tree of Life*, which will make us really and habitually Good and Holy.

What a *Soul* then has that Man! who can supply all with a thin superficial shew of Devotion, in the bowing of an Hypocritical Knee, and the labour of a busie Tongue, and it may be to promote his Secular Interest —

Is it a Wise Provision for Eternity? To be Religious only by *Tydes*, to have only the waterings of a *Flood*, whose Streams are soon suck't back again, till nothing's left, but a black, ill-scented Mud.

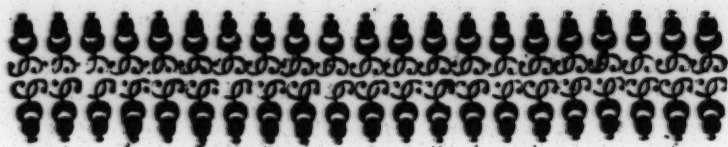
No wonder, if they taste little of the Delights of Religion, who take no heed to their Spirits — Who nevertheless know, that such a Curse is upon the *Nature* of
Man,

Man, as is upon the ground, which was
Curst for his Sake, that it brings forth na-
turally Thorns and Thistles, &c.

See how neat the Gardens are and flour-
ishing —

What! the *Soul* of *Man*, the only neg-
lected thing, as if no body own'd it.





SECT. II.

*Examine your selves — prove your own selves —
Whether Christ be in you? —*

AT the Entrance into this great work of *Self-acquaintance*, my Soul trembles within me, altho' I have done it an hundred times.

Therefore let me intreat you, not to trifle away an odd hour in the perusal of what's here laid down — But reserve it to some of your most retired *Thoughts*, and severest *Meditations*: So you may, by Gods Blessing, find something to strengthen your *Hopes* in *Christ*, and to increase your future *Care* and *Diligence*, and love to *Uprightness*.

Whosoever then, *he be*, that professes himself a *Christian*, and thinks himself verily to be so, and yet hath not the *Love* of *Christ*
Jesus

Jesus kindled and settled in his *Heart*, is in a most dangerous State.

Whosoever hath not embraced *Christ Jesus* with the sweetest *Union* of real *Love*, hath no part in *Him*, — therefore all the *Curses* of the *Law* stand in full force against him. Gal. 3. 10. *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.*

O then! how infinitely accursed are all of us naturally, who on the contrary, have continued in the Violation of all things which are written in it.

I am perswaded, that there is no *Man* so hard or senseless of the misery of being tried by the *Law*, without any appeal unto the *Gospel*, but in his serious hours, when *God* shall in some measure awaken his *Conscience*, he will confess it had been better for him, never to have been born, then that *God*, without the *Mediation* of his *Son*, shou'd call him to a punctual account for the most harmless part of his *Life*.

Now what can a *Man* have to comfort and secure his *Soul* in these sad *Meditations*, but this, that *God* is superabundantly merciful;

ful, infomuch, that *He sent his own Son to redeem us from the curse of the Law, and, to be made a curse for us, Gal. 3: 13.*

These indeed are heavenly Consolations, and such as never fail those who are rightly qualified for them: But now they belong not to such as love not *Christ Jesus*, to such as know not how to value, and worthily esteem, the glorious Purchases of *His Passion*.

It's true, *God* is merciful, infinitely above all finite conceit, but so is *He* just too.

Magnify his Mercy as long as you will, you can never do it enough: But when all is done, you may say as much for his Justice; as *St. Paul, Rom. 11. 22.* equally admires *the goodness and severity of God.*

Whosoever he be then, who looks for Mercy from *God*, without *Christ*, who only hath satisfied his *Justice*, dreams not so much to find *God* merciful; as to find him unjust.

Can any Man be so presumptuous, as to hope to fare the better for *Christ*, who sees nothing desirable in him?

Who

Who is so far from *counting all things dung, that he may win him*, as St. Paul did.

How many now a-days even prefer dung, the muck, and Vanities of this World before him?

Is it likely, that he shou'd have any relief from the *Gospel*, who is so far from *counting all things loss for the Excellency of the knowledge contained in it*, as St. Paul did; that that he can taste no such excellency — that he shou'd loose one farthing, forbear one Pleasure, or forgo one Vanity for it.

Our Saviour himself, *Matth. 10. 37.* expressly tells us, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me*—that is, whosoever loves, what He hath best reason to love in this Life, more than his Saviour, is not worthy to have any Benefit by Him, to have any share in his Merits.

What think we then, can they expect from Him, who are so coldly affected towards him, that they prefer every trifle before Him?

All the Promises of God in Him (in Christ Jesus)

Jesus) are yea, and in him *Amen*, that is, sure and infallible — But still—in *Christ Jesus*.

And what is this to any Man, if He himself be not in *Him*? And how can He be in *Him*? But by being a New Creature, and so loving *Him*.

The sad *accursed* Estate of the False-hearted Christian, who presumes upon *Christ* — whom indeed, He hath nothing to do with; will more affright him; if he would but consider it, in other Men.

Who is there amongst us, but will much pitty and bemoan the lamentable Condition of the poor *Indians*, and other Savages of the un-christian World, whose *Souls* are over-clouded with the blackest Mists of Irreligion, that the Prince of Darkness can possibly wrap them in; who come into the World, knowing not wherefore, and go out of it, dreaming not whither; but live here a-while, without *God* in the World — and then go to the generation of their Fathers, where they *shall never see the Light*, — to use the words of the Psalmist—

A heavy Case indeed, beyond all expression

sion of a *Tragedy*, and which cannot be sufficiently bewail'd, with many Tears.

But now, whosoever he be, within the Paradise of the *Christian Church*, who hath nothing to distinguish him from these miserable Wretches, but his outward conformity to the Laws and Customs of the place, where he lives — Who hath nothing to prove himself a *Christian*; but outward Formalities, the Charity of other Men, and his own slight Imaginations —

Whosoever he be, that hath not as yet espied something in *Christ Jesus*, so amiable, as that in earnest it may challenge his whole *Heart*, before all the Pomp and Pleasure in the World —

I say, that Man, whosoever he be, may keep his Moans and Tears for himself: It's his own Case.

For, for the present, until the *Spirit* of *Grace* shall startle him unto more Sense of the *Mercies* of *Christ*, he is in as bad a Case as the silliest *Indian* — I mean, in respect of the World to come; For in this Life, the most dissembling Christian is partaker of many sweet *Blessings*, which the *Gospel* uses

to carry about with it, from Country to Country, by which it civilizeth and polishes the most rude and barbarous Nations.

But for the *Joy*s of *Eternity*, what better claim can he lay to them, than the wild *American*?

He hath liv'd indeed where he hath heard much talk of *Christ*, of *Redemption*, and the glorious liberty of the Sons of *God*: But what's all this to him, who could never relish any of these things, who never took them to heart, never could find any sweetness in them? We must not think, that living within the Air of the *Gospel*, amongst *Churches* and *Bibles*, can distinguish us from Infidels, exempt us from the rigour of the *Law*, and entitle us to *Christ* — No such matter.

Christ came to his own, but his own received him not, saith *St. John*: Were his own then ever the better for him? Not a whit.

Our Saviour whilst he was talking with the Jews, *John* 3. 40. tells them, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have Life*. He was come unto them, but they would not come unto *Him*.

Altho'

Altho' *Christ* visits us never so frequently, if we welcome him not with that joy, with which *Zachew* once did, tho' *He* pass never so often by our Hearts, if we invite *Him* not in, and get *Him* to sup and stay with us, we must look to get no more by *Him* than those unhappy Heathens, who never heard of *His Name*.

Outward Priviledges advantage a Man nothing in *Christ Jesus*, unless he be so sensibly perswaded of those Miracles of Compassion which *Christ* hath performed for his *Soul*, that upon this perswasion he thinks he can never love him enough, and therefore submits his whole *Soul* unto *Him* in an Universal Obedience unto his Will.

O! let us reverence, respect and embrace the *Son of God*: Least by his anger we perish from the way; from what way? *He* himself is the only way unto his *Father*, to whom *no Man cometh but by him*, as *himself* tells us in the *Gospel*.

Whosoever therefore stands off from *Christ Jesus*, and strives not to be united unto *Him*, by the choicest twine of dearest affection, must needs perish out of the way

to Life, and so continuing still in his Sins, expect all the Curses of the Law to fall upon him.

The Law was our School-Master to bring us to Christ, to amaze us with the terror of our Sins, and to make us feel what need we have of a Saviour, and having one offer'd us, to lay fast hold on Him, whatsoever it cost us, and to prize him above all the riches in the World. But if the Law cannot prevall, we must continue under its lash.

It's true, that after Faith is come we are no longer under a School-Master: But, if this Faith which is inseparably join'd with love never come, we are sure to smart for it thro' all Eternity.

One would think, there needed no more to be said, to prove *him* the most miserable, who loves not *Christ Jesus*, — seeing his having no part in *Him* includes more horrors and terrors, than it's possible for the Brain of any Man to shape the *Ideas* of.

And here you must be told, as heavy a doom as it is, that whosoever he be that is Catechiz'd and brought up in the Christian
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Profession, and yet doth not heartily and sincerely affect *Christ Jesus*, besides all the curses due unto his Sins against the *Law*, he treasures up unto himself a far more compleat Vengeance — for his disesteem and contempt of the *Gospel*.

'Tis true, that *God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be saved*. Yet it follows in the next Verse, *He that believeth not is condemn'd already* — Condemn'd — He believeth not — Why? The *Law* hath sufficiently condemn'd him — True — but now *God* offers him a *Pardon* by his *Son* to exempt him from Condemnation, which seeing he refuses, or cares not to accept; *God* will now, not only have the former Condemnation to continue its force against him, but will load him with another more heavy, which shall never be revers'd by any Pardon.

This is the *Condemnation*, that *Light* is come into the *World*, and Men love Darkness rather than *Light* — This is that great and final Condemnation, which can never be remitted, as that of the *Law* may, for *Christ* is come into the *World*, bringing Redemption with him — But if Men are so
little

little sensible, so cool in the concern — and had rather continue *Satan's* Prisoners still, than come forth into *His* marvellous *Light*.

This neglect, this despising of *Christ Jesus* and his *Gospel* will make 'em compleatly *Anathema Maranatha*.

Because, (if we are not entirely incorporated into *Him*, before we are snatch't out of this *Life*) there remains henceforth no more *Sacrifice* for Sin; but a fearful expectation of *Judgment*, Heb. 10. 26.

If you demand the reason of all this mischief—

It is because the not laying to *Heart* what *Christ* hath done for us, and the not receiving *Him*, being offer'd us, with the thankful *Affections* of *Love* and *Reverence*, unmixed *Delight*, and compleat *Content* in *Him* — is the highest dishonour, and basest indignity, which can be offer'd by a sinful Man to the most blessed and glorious *Trinity*.

As to the *Father*, whosoever sets *Light* by *His Son* doth most impudently undervalue both *His Wisdom* and *His Goodness*.

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The contriving of Man's Redemption by the *Death of his Son* in the fulness of time, and now reveal'd to us, is the result of the infinite, boundless *Wisdom of God* Blessed for ever; whereby *He* purpos'd to get himself far more glory, than *He* did by the Creation of the World — When by a Deliverance so superlatively admirable, *He* shou'd both save Mankind, and astonish it.

This is that, for which the *Gospel* is so often call'd the *Wisdom of God unto Salvation*.

This is that Mystery of Godliness — which is great — by the Confession of all — without Controversy.

This is that illustrious Mystery of Salvation, which the Prophets enquir'd after, and searched diligently (with the Angels) to look into.

Lastly, This is that *Wisdom of God*, which hath such curious Variety in it, *Eph. 4. 10.*

Well then, to come to the point, when the time is come (as it is come to us, who live in this blessed Noon-tide of the *Gospel*) that *God* reveals to any Man *this* astonishing
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Mystery of His infinite Wisdom — When *He* pleaseth to shew any Man how admirably *He* hath contriv'd his Salvation for him, by sending his *own Son* to satisfy his Justice,—and therefore expects abundance of glory by it —

If that *Man* now created by *God*, that he might applaud and enjoy his lesser works of Creation, shall behave himself so ignorantly and stupidly — that he, forsooth, can scarce have patience to take a full view of his Glorious Son, in the *Light* of the *Gospel*,—if he can espy *there*, no such *Wisdom* in the contrivance of his Salvation as may ravish him — No such wonders as may withdraw his Mind from S. S. W. W.—O Sirs, this is an indignity to the glorious *God* the *Father*, beyond all expression of mortal eloquence.

Whosoever sets Light by *Christ*, undervalues the *Goodness* and *Mercy* of *God*.

The *Father* from everlasting beholding Mankind in the ugly mass of Corruption, thro' their own wilful Rebellion, knew *He* must be just, and yet desir'd to be merciful — And when nothing might make these two stand together, but Satisfaction from *One*
as

as infinite as *Himself*, that He might commend his Love to us, He resolv'd not to spare the Son of his Love — But to send him in similitude of sinful Flesh, to undergo that heavy business for us — presuming, as it is in the Parable, that howsoever his other Messengers had far'd but ill in the World, yet his Son — the *Heir* shou'd be entertain'd with Reverence.

O then! can we imagine with what hellish contempt they even defy the Love of God towards them, who look strangely upon his Son, who behave themselves towards *Him*, as if there needed not to have been all this care taken for them.

As to the Ever Blessed *Jesus Christ* the second Person in the glorious Trinity, it wou'd be endless to rehearse the indignities which are offered unto *Him* — by such as call him Lord, Lord, but yet deal not honestly with *him* in their Hearts.

Greater Love than this hath no Man, than that he lay down his Life for his Friend, saith our Blessed Saviour, John 15. 13. True Lord, it's the greatest Love that one Friend can shew another, — But yet, thy Love was greater unto us, in that Thou layd'st down thy Life for thy Enemies — Yea; in that thou

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vouchsafedst for our sakes to take *such a Life* which thou mightest lay down.

Consider, how the *Son of God* out of meer Obedience to his *Father*, and in Compassion unto us, *emptied himself* of the lustre of his *Diety*, and in the form of a *Servant* humbled himself to the death, even the most painful, and shameful death of the *Cross*, Phil. 2. 8.

Pemse the *History* of his *Passion*—and that of his whole *Life*, which was little better than a *Passion*.

Observe how thoroughly the sad predictions of a *despised Life*, and ignominious *Death*, *Isa. 53.* were fulfilled in *him*—how in every point *He* was made a *Man of Sorrows*—

Draw into a Catalogue the rude discourtesies, churlish affronts, the revilings, torments, agonies, and the contradictions of sinful *Caitiffs*, which *He* indur'd with *Patience*.

Remember that all this befell *Him* only because the *Lord* laid upon him the iniquity of us all, *Isa. 53. 6.*

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Remember I say, that all this was but what we had deserved, and therefore we may well suppose *Him* with pitiful moans crying out unto us upon the Cross in the moaning language of *Jerusalem*, Lam. 1. 12. *Is it nothing to all you that pass by! behold and see if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow.*

Now Sirs, whosoever he be that hath read or heard all these things so punctually set down in the *holy Scriptures*, that he hath had *his Saviour* even crucified before his eyes, and believes this *History*, and yet cannot bleed within, or weep without, for his Sins, which were the cause of all — But can be mov'd to more tender Passions by a Tragic-Fable created in the Fancy of a Poet.

Questionless that Man offers his *Saviour* the most piercing injury, and does the basest spight that's possible for a mortal Wretch to the *Lord of Glory*.

That Man's *ingratitude* is more painful unto *Christ Jesus*, than all the Thorns were — in his Head, and wounds him more deeply, than the Nails did his Hands and Feet — and therefore we cannot imagine a lighter Curse due to him than *Anathema* —

For by his vile neglect of that *Death* of which his Sins, as well as any Man's else, were a cause — He becomes guilty of the Murder of the *Son of God*, and one of those, who crucify as much as in them lies, the *Son of God afresh*, and put him to an open shame — Heb. 6. 6.

O! Ye *Gentlemen Gentiles*, let me entreat you to read our great *Apostle St. Paul* a thousand times, and to pray for the *Blessed Spirit* to be in you the *Spirit of Wisdom* and *Revelation* of the *Mystery of God* — the *Father and Christ*.

'Tis impossible to read *St. Paul* without being warm'd, and feeling some degree of a *Divine Enthusiasm* spread it self joyfully around the Soul —

Lastly, Whosoever instructed in the *Gospel*, and doth not in earnest love *Christ Jesus*, he vexes and grieves the third Person in the *Trinity*, the *Holy Spirit*, whose chief business here below is to work our Hearts unto the *Love of Christ*, and to solicit the match between *Him* and our *Souls*.

And this is one reason, why our *Saviour* being

being to leave this World, speaks so much in St. *John* of what the *Comforter* shou'd do for *Him* after his departure.

He shall testify of me: He shall glorify me: Read close our Lord's Valedictory Chapters in St. *John* 14. 15, 16.

Whosoever then makes the *Holy Spirit* to labour in Vain, not suffering his persuasions to make any impressions upon his *Heart*, or get thence any Glory for *Him*, whose *Agent He* is: But thinks 'tis enough to be call'd a Christian rather than a Jew — In what a fit of discontent, in what a chafe (may we think) doth that Man send, or rather drive away the *Spirit of Grace*.

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the Fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, 1 Cor. i. 9. This was that *Mystery* which was hidden from Ages and Generations, in which *God* would make known the riches of his *Glory* — which Holy Men for many Ages saluted afar off, and rejoiced to see, and which the Angels themselves desire most heedfully to pry into out of their Heavenly places, beholding in the Church the manifold Wisdom of *God*, *Eph. 3. 10.*

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This being so, whosoever is admitted to see, what is the *Fellowship* of the *Mystery*, which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in *God* — If he be so caught up with admiration of it, that he grows into a loathing of all his former Happiness in comparison of this; if at the sight of such a concourse of *Wonders*, he be so ravish'd out of himself, that he care not what becomes of what he most doted on before, so that he may get his part in *that Fellowship*: Such a one is worthy of *Christ*, because he gives *God* that Glory which *Christ* meant to procure *Him*.

Now that we may not dishonour the *Gospel* and deceive ourselves by gross Conceits of a Common easiness for any Man to get to Heaven.

Let us all know before hand, what must of necessity be resolv'd upon, if we will follow *Christ Jesus* to any purpose —

If we set not then, so high a price upon our hopes by *him*, and bring this Resolution with us, to part with any thing, which may hinder us from doing constant, universal service to *him*, we are not qualified to
re-

receive those *Favours*, which we hope for.

It may so happen, in many Cases, where in we must either deal dishonourably with our *Saviour*, or break Squares with the Men of this World: In this exigency, 'tis requir'd that we run the hazard of any Man's favour, or of our Lives, that nothing may interrupt our Obedience unto *Him*, or intercept the Light of his Countenance: So shall we keep our selves in a plac'd, well temper'd contentedness, upon short warning, to part with all things, to be sure of the *main*, that is, *Christ Jesus*, in whom we are sure to find (with an infinite over-plus) whatsoever we loose for his Sake.

It will not stand either with the *Justice*, or *Wisdom of God the Father*, to loose the Glory of his Everlasting Mercies in his *Son*, by conferring them upon such, as do not perceive and acknowledge some outstripping excellency in them, beyond all His temporal Blessings.

It is usual with God, in his general Providence, to heap his Temporal favours upon such, as never think of his Love in dealing thus Bountifully with them: But the reason of that is, because He can call them
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in again, or blow upon them, at his Pleasure — Tho' *He* get no Glory for His Mercies, whilst *He* bestows them, as Blessings — yet *He* can be sure to glorify his Justice, by turning them into Curses.

But *His Everlasting Mercies*, those riches of his Love in *Christ*, *He* useth not to part with *them*, so easily.

He lets not them go out of his Hands —

But by his *Ministers*, *He* Proclaims and Displays the infinite worth and value of *Them*: That if any Man be so taken with the lustre of *them* — that for Joy, *He goes and sells all that he hath to buy them*, and thinks he hath a good bargain too:

Then God presently Seals unto Him an Everlasting Assurance of them, by the *Spirit of Promise*, and gives Possession of them at the day of his Death, when all other Possessions leave him. —

You see upon what slippery Terms we stand, between the greatest *Curses*, and the greatest *Blessings*.

If we have therefore indeed made *Christ*
Jesus

Jesus our Portion; If we have been so feelingly affected with his *Favours*, that now with the Spouse in the Canticles, *we are even Sick with Love of Him*: If, as *St. Paul* prays, *we are so rooted and grounded in Love*, that with a constant Resolution, we prefer the Intellectual Pleasures which flow from his reconciled Countenance, before any thing else whatsoever.

O then! we may hug our selves, as Men over-joy'd: For as sure as *God is God*, all his rich *Promises* in *Christ Jesus* shall be yea and *Amen* unto us.

But, if those Heavenly Raptures and glorious Trances of sweetest intercourse between *Christ* and our *Souls*, sound as *Phantastick* Dreams, or seem to us, as *Enthusiastick* Fits: So that, we stupidly content our selves with an empty Profession of his *Name*, and heartless conformity to the outward garb of the *Gospel*, never striving either to express, or to feel the inward *Power* and *Life* of it: I say, if we so go on, in a heavy, dull manner; never Retiring unto *our Saviour*, but in some Melancholy Moods, which we are quickly weary of, — O! then, we most grossly delude our selves — *God* is not mocked, *He* requireth *Truth* in the inward
G Parts,

Parts, and the exactest kind of *Love*, that can be imagin'd.

The Sum of *Christianity* is to shew, how miserable we are by Sin, and how *Happy* we may be in *Christ*: If then, upon due enquiry, we find in our selves a tender, affectionate apprehension of our infinite deserved Miseries, and his infinite undeserved Mercies; so that we are wrought upon to a constant, even, universal Resolution of pleasing *Him* in all things, at all times and in all Companies, with a dis-esteem of whatsoever is honourable or pleasant in the World, in Comparison of *His Favour*, and have a continual Hunger and Thirst after more sensible Communion — I say, if upon strict *Examination* you find in your *Souls* these good dispositions, you may comfort your selves in your real *Love* to *Christ Jesus*.

But on the contrary, if we look into our *Hearts*, and search into our *Souls*, and there find no Sacred fire upon the hearth, but all cold and uncomfortable — this is an unhappy Case:

Yet you may be happy in this at present, that you know the worst of your self, and
may

may if you will, look out betimes for an effectual *Remedy*.

Christianity is no ludicrous, or jesting matter — to profess *Christ* is the most serious Business in the World; therefore questionless there is a great deal more in it, than the generality think.

Let us most seriously consider, how *Christ Jesus*, out of the abundance of his Love, with which He lov'd us (tho' Enemies) shed his precious Blood to wash away those stains from our Souls, which make us loath our selves, thro' the guilt of Sin —

Having then our *Souls* attentively fixt upon these things: Let us betake our selves to earnest *Prayer*, and with strong Cries and Groans importune the *Spirit* of *Grace* to enlighten the Eyes of our Understandings, *that we may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth — and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, Eph. 3. 19.*

Do this, from your *Heart*, and continue in it a-while, with an eager Patience—— then I dare tell you, that you feel a strange alteration

alteration in your self; that you feel not one single commotion only in your Soul, but a throng of *Passions*, and the discovery of some *latent Powers* never before known — then will you get an enlarged *Mind*, and begin to grow acquainted with those warm Affections to *Christ Jesus*, which *Holy Men* have felt in all Ages, and striv'd to express to others, but could not.

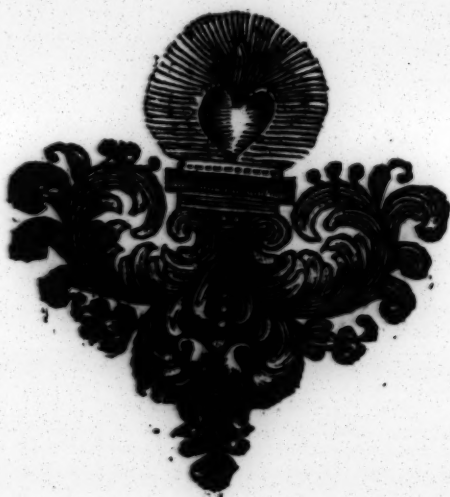
The greater Sinner you have been, the more will you lay about you, with Tears of Sorrow, and Tears of Joy; and in a holy kind of fury, *strive to love much, because much is forgiven.*

Now, you will plainly see the difference between one *Professor* and another, and what a deal of Angelic-comfort you have lost, while a stranger unto *Christ* and true *Christianity*.

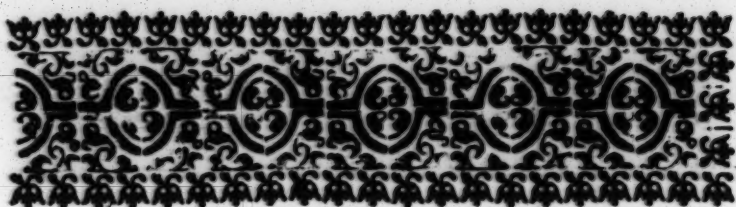
But having got through these cloudy scuds of Penitent sadness, and recover'd the *Light* — you'll rejoice (as the Wise Men did when they found the Star) with exceeding great Joy, and follow on thro' thick and thin — thro' all Difficulties and Oppositions whatsoever, till you come to see your *Saviour*, as He is, in incomprehensible *Splendor* and *Glory* amongst

mongst infinite millions of glorified *Saints*
and *Angels* —

*Beloved, building up your selves on your
most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
keep your selves in the Love of God, looking
for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto
eternal Life, Jude 20, 21.*



SECT.



S E C T. III.

*Some Rules whereby we may Adorn our Souls,
rectify our Reason, and Square our Actions,
which are the most desirable things in
the World.*

BUT there are so many, who mind not those things, which are above, beyond or without them, dreading a change from the course of *Nature*, that they become fond of their *Ignorance*, and so narrow in the *Powers* of their *Souls*, by limiting their *desires* after *Worldly* things — that 'tis very discouraging to *others*.

Nevertheless, let it be your main study and endeavour to get the *Temper* of your *Mind*, more *Spiritual*.

For

For 'tis to be supposed, some Holy and Spiritual *Principles* are already implanted in you; But that is not enough.

For in whatsoever degree the *Mind* is Carnal or Worldly, it will in a proportionable degree, at least, withdraw from God and *Heaven*.

While any *Earthly Tincture* is fresh with you, and fixes impressions upon your *Spirit*, many excuses will be found, and manifold *Diversions* sought, to hinder its *Spiritual Communion*.

Therefore fence against the addictedness of your *Hearts* to those *Other Things*: And carefully watch and fortify the *inlets* of *sense*.

Trust not your *Senses* and their *Objects* to Parley: But under strict Inspection.

Never suffer it, that they shou'd let in upon you, what is suitable and grateful to them, at their own Pleasure.

You'll need to have a *Spirit of might and Power*, that may countermand and overrule in every of those Ports, and turn the
Battle

Battle in the Gate: Those use to be the Places of most strength; and surely here there needs most.

The present *Case*, and present *State*, cannot admit, to give up, unsollicitous, to *Pleasure* in the best *Object*.

If you Omit *Care* and *Vigilancy*, you'll soon find such *Things* come in upon you, as will corrupt and spoil all your *Divine Pleasures*.

Therefore mix with your outward Concerns, an *Holy Care*, rather than *Sinful Vanity*; *That* tends to preserve you, *This* utterly to destroy.

This Present *State*, being that of *Conflict* and *Warfare*: 'Tis better to bear the inconveniency of *Watching*, and *Guarding*, to enjoy a Rational Safety, and secure our Spiritual *Treasure*; than throw Open our *Gates*, and permit all our delectable *Things* to the rapine and spoil of Merciless Enemies.

Therefore strictly Guard all the *Avenues* of your *Inward Man*.

You'll find it more easy to *keep*, than *drive*, out. Let

Let a *Spirit* of *Wisdom* and *Judgment* reside within you, that may *Prudently* consider and *Examine* all Causes of *Business*, and every presenting *Object*: Here put 'em to a stand, till you have wisely and deliberately *Determin'd*, what is to be entertain'd, and what not.

But if you will have no *Rule* over your own *Spirit*: But let it be, as a *City* broken down, and without *Walls* — If you will live careless and indulge *Sloth* — you'll soon find crouds of impertinent *Thoughts* and foolish *Objects* press in, and make you become sensual, impure — &c.

Here let me drop this Note, to prevent *Censure* and *Danger* — You may observe some of much devotedness to *Piety*, that allow themselves the *Liberty* of being very Pleasant in their usual *Conversation*; very Diligent in their outward *Callings*; And often in the gratification of the grosser Part — But observe them more narrowly, how God hath fenc'd and hedg'd them in, by *his own Rules* and *Laws* set about 'em: And in those *Bounds* there is *Scope* and *Latitude* enough, for the Satisfaction of Sober *Desires* and *Inclinations* of a meaner kind, without breaking thorough *His Inclosure*.

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The very *Rules* themselves of *Temperance* and *Sobriety*, which *God* hath given us; For the guiding and governing of sensitive *Desires*, do plainly imply, that they are *Permitted*.

For that, which ought not to be, is not to be *Regulated*, but *Destroyed*.

But the keeping within *Bounds*, and the strict *Observation* of such *Rules*, as limit the *Inclinations* and *Functions* of the low *Animal Life*, may very well consist with our *Spiritual Life*, and their high *Enjoyments*, and be made *Subservient* to them.

Our great care and study must be to repress and mortify all earthly and sensual inclinations, unto that *Degree*, as to be reduc'd to a conformity and an agreement with the *Divine Rules* and *Measures*.

For *Spiritual Enjoyments* must be separated from unbecoming *Vanities* and earthly *Impurities*.

See then to the usual *Temper* of your *Spirit*, and do not think it enough, that you hope, you are *Regenerate*, or that the great
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Renewing Change did some time or other pass upon you : And that therefore your *Case* is good and safe, and you may [*now*] take your ease and liberty.

Be intent upon growing in *Spirituality*, and to get into a confirmed State.

Labour to find, that you are in your ordinary Course, *after the Spirit* ; then will you, *savour the things of the Spirit* : And then especially with the Blessed Lord of Life himself become your *great Delight*, and your *exceeding Joy*.

Retire your self much from this World ; draw off your *Mind* and *Heart*. This is *God's* great Rival. The Friendship of this World *is enmity to him* : So is a *Carnal Mind*.

Converse with the *Word of God* — Read his descriptions of Himself : Don't content your self to have the Words and Expressions before your Eyes, or in your Mouth : But make your pauses, and consider the *Things* themselves signify'd by them ; — And labour to fix the apprehension and true import of all the *Divine* expressions deep in your *Mind*.

Above all, *Pray earnestly and continually to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, that He would give you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Him, Eph. 1, 2, 3d. Ch.*

From such as so desire to know him, He will not conceal himself. This is *following on to know the Lord.*

Make this your *Mark and Scope*, that the temper of your *Spirit* may be such, that the *secret* of the *Divine Presence* may become to you, as your very *Element*; wherein you can most freely breathe and live, and be most at ease, and enjoy your self.

And why should this *Temper of Spirit*, in the clear Light of the *Gospel* be look'd upon as unattainable? Laziness, a pretence to Humility, and an affected Modesty, not to aim so high, — starve Religion, and stifle all truly noble and generous *Desires*.

Think how unworthy it is, since you have *Faculties*, and noble *Powers of Soul* — (and those now renew'd, refin'd, and improv'd by *Divine Light and Grace*,) capable of being employ'd about so much higher *Obje's*,
than

than those of *Sense*, to yield 'em to a Confinement in so low and mean things.

Why should your *Mind* and *Thoughts* be limited within the narrow Bounds of this Sublunary World?

Urge on your *Spirit*, make it *enter* into the invifible *World*, with an Heavenly disposition — *Pray* always — And the *Divine Spirit* will not be restrain'd, if duly fought, and dutifully comply'd with and obey'd.

Keep your distance from fuch things, as any way indispose your *Spirit*, or render it lefs fuitable to *Divine* Converfe.

Carefully reserve your self, as one, whom the Lord hath fet apart for himfelf, Pfal. 4. 3.

Reckon yourfelf as fome way appertaining to the Bleffed Society in *Heaven*. Mind the Affairs thereof, as thofe of your own Country, and that properly belong to you.

Surely *Faith* and *Rectify'd Reason*, well us'd, would furnifh us with regular and warrantable *Notions* enough.

There-

Therefore design a large Field for your Thoughts and Contemplations. Think how all things sprang from *God*, and among them, *Man* — that excellent part of this lower Creation: Think, what He was towards *God* — and what He is now become —

Think of the admirable *Person*, the glorious Excellencies, the mighty Design, the wonderful Achievements and Performances of the *Blessed Redeemer*: And the happy Issue He will bring things to, at length.

Think of, and study much, the *Nature*, Parts and Accomplishments of the *New Creature*: Get your Mind well instructed and furnished with apprehensions of the whole entire *Frame* of that holy Rectitude, wherein the *Image* of *Christ* upon renewed *Souls* doth consist: And of the several lovely *Ornaments* of the *Inward Man*.

Cast about, and you will not want matter of Spiritual Employment and exercise.

And if you wou'd thus use your *Thoughts*, and thus daily entertain your self, you may expect a Spiritual Frame of *Mind* to grow habitual.

Lift

Lift up then your *Mind* above your *Senses*, and all sensible things; and frame *No*tions of *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Justice*, *Holiness*, *Truth*, *Power*, with other known *Perfections*, all concurring in a *Being* purely *Spiritual*, and the *Author* and *Original* of all Things —

Do you perceive *Life*, *Wisdom*, *Power*, *Love*, in other Beings; these must all have some *Fountain* —

Then consider, this is *He* from whom you and all things sprang, and in whom your *Life* is, and all your glorious *Hopes*.

Your illuminated *Understanding* with the Divine Gift of *Faith*, duly exercis'd, will render you as sure, as if you saw with your *Eyes* the unbounded glory, in which all these meet; and will assure you too, 'tis so much the more excellent and glorious; for that, it cannot be seen with your *Bodily Eyes*.

Read in the *Word* of God, His descriptions of *Himself*, that *He is the Lord*, the *Lord God*, *gracious and merciful* — Read in his own *Holy Book*, that *He is Light*, *He is Love*

Love, He is God only Wise, He is the Almighty, God All-sufficient, and that the Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him.—

Whilst in this silent, humble *Adoration*, you'll feel some Vital Beams of Light penetrate your waiting Eye, and open your inviting *Soul* to admit *his* pleasant *Light*, and enlivening communications, which when receiv'd, you'll find your *Desires* panting with *Love*, breathing forth in soft accents of *Prayer*, all its *Wishes*, *Moans* and *Cries*: Then will you draw forth abundant *effusions*— And perceive the *Blessed God* takes more pleasure in imparting, than you can *Pains* in seeking, or *Pleasure* in receiving.

If *God* be the Solace and *Joy* of your *Soul*, and the Meditation of *Him* be sweet?

Labour to turn all your Religion into *Active Life*, and fervent *Love*, by the *Agitation* of your working thoughts.

But still remember, you must join a *Spiritual* dependance on *God*, for special influence and concurrence, to the maintaining of your *Spiritual Life*.

You

You must not *imagine*, you have all that is needful for your *Spirit*, and the well-governing of it, in your own Hands and Power.

Nor ought you to think, that what is needful is not to be had.

He is ever mindful of His *Covenant*: *He* will not famish the *Souls* that cry to *Him*, and wait on *Him*: Their *Hearts* shall live that seek *God*.——

He puts you upon seeking, that you may find: And there is nothing more suitable to the *New Creature*.

Let it be therefore your daily business, to tend your *inward Man*; and to keep your *Heart* with all Diligence, for out of it are the issues of *Life*: All *Vital Principles* are lodg'd there, and flow easily from their own *Fountain*, if labour and sweet delight are coupled, to keep the *Fountain* pure.

Let us then carefully observe the first stirrings of our *Thoughts* and *Desires*, and enquire concerning each, whence they come,
from

from a good or bad *Principle*; and whither they tend, to *good* or *hurt*.

Shall I let Sin, the *Tormenter* of my *Soul*, rob me of the *Comforts* of my *Spiritual Life*. — Oh! look up, and *Pray* down the quickening influences of the *Blessed Spirit*, that light and gladness may possess your *Soul*.

Exercise yourself unto *Godliness*, 1 Tim. 4. Turn the *Powers* of your *Soul* to *God*: *All* the several *Graces* of the *Spirit*, *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Love*, *Fear* —

Retire much to *God* — Learn, and habituate your self to secret converse with *Him*. Then Exercise a just *Authority* over your self.

Keep your *Imagination*, *Passions*, and sensitive appetite under a due restraint: So as to be moderate in your *Desires* and *Enjoyments*; *Patient* as to wants and sufferings, &c. —

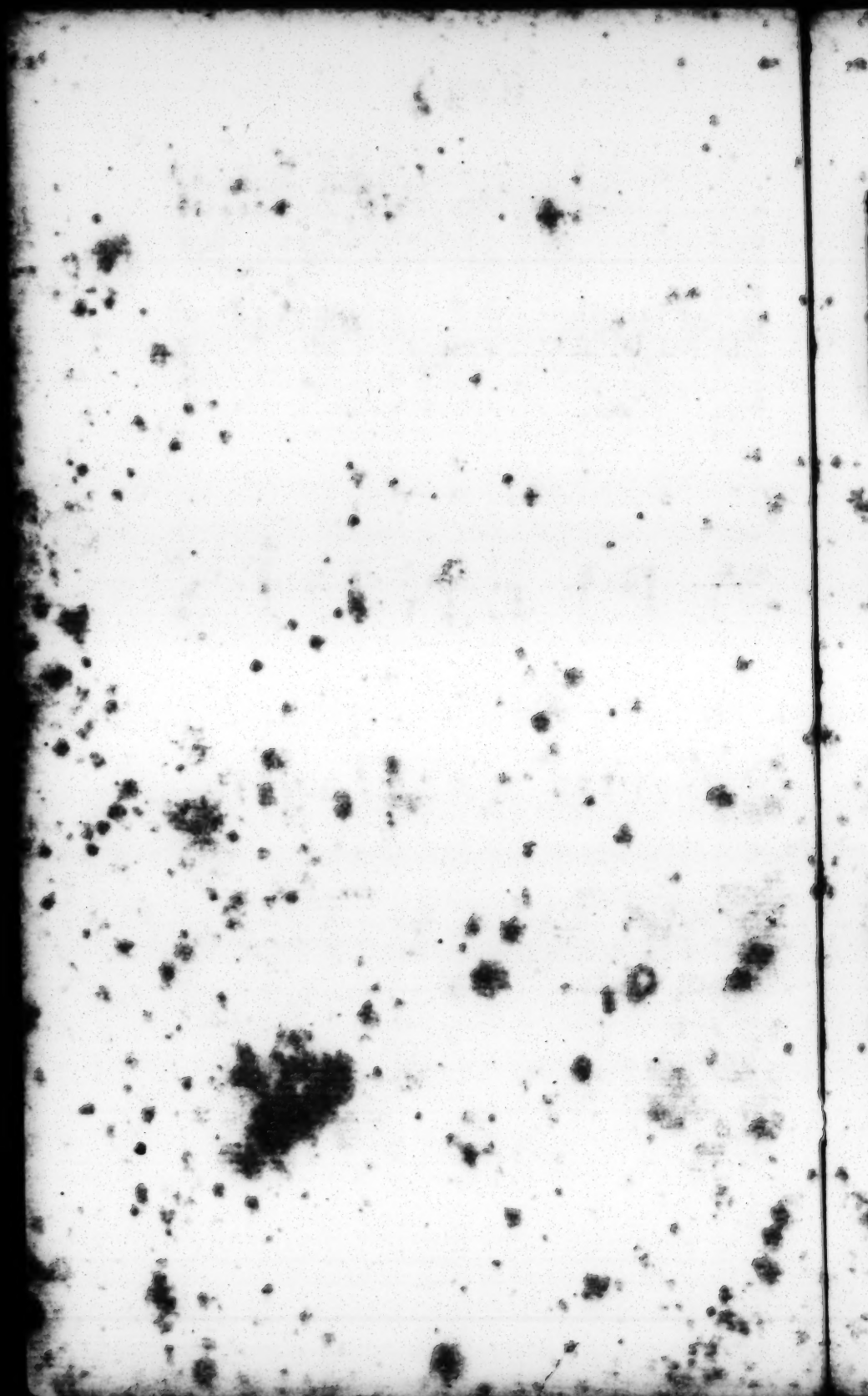
Forbear and *Forgive* the injurious, relieve the necessitous, delight in good Men, pity the bad: Be grateful to Friends, mild to Enemies, just to all.

Ab-

Abhor to do not only a dishonest, but
a mean and unworthy thing, for any ad-
vantage.

Pass thus thro' the *World*; and you'll look
somewhat like a *Christian* indeed.

F . I N I S .





THE
APPENDIX
ABOUT
Notions and Opinions.



It is *Divine Wisdom*, not to lay too much *Weight* upon outward *Forms*, or inward *Opinions* in Religion.

Because the *Flesh* labours to *Heighten* and *Establish* it self in the *Glorious Appearances* of *Jesus Christ*.

But

But do You retur ninto the *Spirit*, the *Bosom* of *Jesus*, to be made *One Spirit* with *Him*, then you are truly *Blessed*.

The *Desire* of the *Flesh* to set up its *self*, betrays the *Creature* to *Loss*.

What *Gain* is it to any *One* to possess a *Life*, in all the *Pride*, *Power*, and *Pleasure* of the *Natural Image*, which is the *First Creation*?

If in the mean time *He* be *Dead* to the *Spirit*.

What *Loss* is it! to be kept from *Dying* to all *Flesh*, for *Christ*, from dying with *Christ*. When you shall *Rise* again in the *Spirit*, with all your *Joys* about you.

It may be, you are startled to think of the utter extinguishing of all those *Operations* of *Sense* and *Reason*, which have been as sweet, as *Life* to you.

Lay aside these *Vain-Fears* — and *Comfort* your *self* with *This*; That all the *Worthy Operations* and *Exercises* of your *Na-*

Natural Powers, all your *Worthy Works* shall follow you, thro' that dark entrance of the *Cave's Mouth*, (which is *Death*) into the large *Fields of Immortality*, and spring up afresh about you, from a *Root of Eternal Life*, and *Pleasures*.

Now you shall cease from all your *Labours*, by the *Change* of your *Natural Image*: And what before stood upon a *stalk of Vanity, Trouble and Mortality*, shall attend you, and be *bright'ned* with your *new Appearance* in the *Spiritual Image*.

You read of *New Heavens*, and a *New Earth*, wherein Dwelleth *Righteousness*.

We may perceive already, that the *Natural State of Man*, both *Soul and Body* are *Earibly*.

The *Body* is a *Vessel* to hold the *Soul* — the *Soul* is a *Vessel* to hold the *Divine Treasure*, the *Spirit of Jesus Christ*, the *Seed* that abideth in thee. *John* 3. 9.

The

The *Treasure* in the illuminated Understanding is *Spiritual Truth*, the *shining forth of God*; in the Face of *Jesus Christ*.

In our inferiour *Faculties* — as *Reason, Will, Affections, Fancy, Imagination, &c.* Wherein also the *Vigor of Christ's Spirit* is discern'd, yet 'tis thro' Clouds and Mists within us.

Hence are apt to arise various *Notions and Forms*, by which too many form and shape their apprehensions of *Gospel-Truths*, altho' these are but *Earthen Vessels*.

Now the best *Opinions* may hold the *Divine Treasure*; yet they are but *Vessels*. Therefore we shou'd take heed of laying too much weight upon them; because they are not the *Treasure*.

They are (as it were) a *Temple* built out of the *Earth*, in which God is pleas'd to *Dwell*.

'Tis then, at least, *Crassa Minerva*, to Esteem and Worship the *Temple*, instead of *God*, that *Dwells* in the *Temple*.

Be

Be not therefore too fond of your *curious Notions* and *Opinions* in which you conceive of *Jesus Christ* — When *He* alone is the only *Treasure* in them.

What Comparison is there between our *Opinions* of *Truth*, and the *Truth* it self.

The *Notions*, the *Opinions* of *Truth* they are One with us — They are our own —

The *Truth* it self is *God*, His *Excellency* and His *Power*.

So much weight then as we lay on our *Opinions* of *Truth*; so much we take from *Truth* it self — so much we give to our selves, so much we take from *God*.

Our *Understandings* here below, are cloudy, therefore our *Notions* cannot with any degree of *clearness*, answer to the *Brightness* of *Truth*.

When the *Sun* and *Moon* arise, they appear not bright, but often reddish —

K

Not

Not as they are in themselves, because we see *Them* thro' a great many *Earthly Vapours*.

So it is impossible any *Spiritual Truth* shou'd form any clear *Notion* of it self in our *Understandings*: Because our *Understandings* are *Earthly*, full of *Vapours* and thick *Mists*, in which all our *No-tions* of *Christ*, and of *His Truth* are form'd.

Truth is *Heavenly* and *Divine* — Great as *God* is.

Is it possible to represent *God* fully by any one *Piece* of *Created Excellency*?

So impossible is it, to represent *Spiritual Truth* in our *Understandings* fully, by any *Opinion* of *Ours*.

We apprehend *Our Souls* are *Spiritual Things*, and so much of *Them*, as we think fit, or can, represent by the *Body*, we do by several *Members* — because no One can give you a full *Representation* of the *Soul*.

Truth is *Spiritual* and *Divine*: *Opini-
ons*

ons and *Notions* they are *Natural*: Therefore its impossible for any one *Notion* or *Opinion* to give you the full Truth — But that little which we have, must be receiv'd in many broken *Notions*.

How *Vain* is it then, for any to be too Confident?

Rather take heed of over-valuing any *Notions* of your own, or under valuing a *Notion* of *Truth*, which another *Man* hath, and you have not.

It may be, you have one Piece of *Truth* in your *Notions* — Perhaps another *Man* hath another Piece in his *Notions*: For *Truth* can appear in contrary *Notions* and *Opinions*.

This is the *Glory* of *Spiritual* Things, that they can clothe themselves with all manner of *Earthly* Shapes.

It is the *Greatness* and *Majesty* of *Jesus Christ*, that *He* passes thro' all *Forms* and all *Conditions*, and yet still is the same in the midst of them all.

Is there any thing more contrary, than a *Cross* and a *Throne*? K 2 And

And yet you may see the same *Jesus* in both.

One *Man* esteemeth one day before another: Another esteemeth every day alike — both these are contrary; yet both may have the same aim, to make himself a *Spiritual Sacrifice* to *God*.

Two *Saints* may have the same *Spiritual Sense* of *Jesus Christ*, and both of 'em may express it so contrary, as hardly to bear one with another; till they come more inwardly to feel the same *Truth*, and Experience, the same sweetness to break forth from their *Hearts*, and Unite each others.

For in the *Spiritual discoveries* of *Christ*, who is able to comprehend the growths of good *Minds*? And to understand the various *Improvements*, *Measures* and *Attainments* of the *Spiritually Diligent*.

It is impossible for *Us* to set bounds to *Spiritual Things*: To stint that *Spirit* in our *selves* or *Others*, which is a *Fountain of Divine Light and Life* in all
Re-

Regenerated Souls, continually sending forth new Streams——

It may please God, and often doth, to communicate *Spiritual* and *Heavenly Treasure*—most richly, to weak and shallow *Minds*.

How frequently doth it come to pass, that a poor Man of low Understanding, all whose *Opinions* of God and of *Jesus Christ* are but weak and low, and his *Notions* dark, mixt with a great deal of Dross and Ignorance:—Yet in these weak, low and dark *Notions* of his, *He possesses Jesus Christ* more fully, *He enjoys the Visions and Visitations of God* in his Soul, more abundantly and sweetly, than that Man, whose *Opinions* are so far larger, and whose *Notions* are higher and righter.

We cannot assign the *highest* or the *lowest* State of *Saints*, whilst they are here below.—The Reason of all this is manifest; because 'tis not the *Vessel* that makes you rich, but the *Treasure* that is in the *Vessel*.

At the best, here we know but in part:

part: All the Notions and Opinions we have of Spiritual Things, and all the Appearances too in our Understandings, they are imperfect.

All our *Prophecyings*, all the *Breakings* forth of *Christ* in our apprehensions,—they are but broken things.

When *Jesus Christ* shall come in his own Form, and shall make our *Natural* Understanding wholly *Spiritual*: Then all the *Notions*, all the *Opinions* and all the *Forms*, by which we have received *Him* hitherto, shall vanish, and be no more:—Because *Jesus Christ* shall swallow them all up by the *Brightness* of his own *Appearance*.

Observe how it is in the comings forth of *Light*: So it is in the *Breakings* forth of *Christ* in a Saint—they are compar'd to *Light*, that shines to the *perfect Day*.

When *Light* first breaks out in the morning, you have it in a grey colour; as it goes on, it changes its colour from grey to red, to Saffron—and Variety of colours:—But when *perfect Light* comes, there

there is no more any Colour; all are lost in the greater Light.

Such are the Breakings forth of *Jesus Christ* in *Us*; while our Understandings are partly Natural, partly Spiritual.

There will be *Variety* of Colours, in *Variety* of *Notions* and *Opinions*:—But as the Colours grow brighter and brighter, so these *Notions* and *Opinions* will grow clearer.

And when the *Divine Light* shall shine forth fully, and in *Perfection*, then all these Colours of *Opinions* and *Notions* shall Vanish, and be quite lost for Ever. The *Fashion* of this World passeth away.

The *Body* we now wear doth not more differ from the *Body* which we shall have when *Perfect* in *Glory*: Than our present *Notions*, *Opinions*, *Forms* and *Models* do, from the *Substantial*, bright *Appearances*, which shall then be.

What a sad thing is it then! to see the *Children* of *God* fall out and Quarrel with each other, for their differences in *Opinions*.

When

When in the Diversity of Opinions all may possess the same Truth, the same Treasure.

That which Unites Christians is *Spirit* and *Substance*, in which *They* shall live and dwell together for ever.

Hast thou Reason to think, that the *Substance* of *Truth*, the *Lord Jesus*, dwells in any *Man*, whatever his *Opinions* may be, then *Love* him?

This is that, that holy *Job* speaks of, when he was reproach'd by his Friends: — Well, says he, grant all this, that all my *Opinions* and *Notions* are as contrary to *Truth*, as may be, yet you shou'd say, *seeing the Root dwells in him*, let us *Love* him.

Blessed be the *Holy Name* of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath placed all our *Hopes* of *Happiness*, and all true *Joy* and *Blessedness*, not in any thing that is *Ours*, but only in *Himself*.

For if it were *Opinions*, or outward *Forms*, upon which the *Peace* of *Christians*

stians depended: — Then happy were that *Man*, that had the greatest *Wit*, that was the *Learned'st Scholar*: For *Opinions* are Nature's *Model*, in our Understanding, by which we take in Spiritual Things, and therefore are advanc'd by Natural Excellencies.

But since *Christ* alone hath the pure *Life* of all in his own *Person*: Let us *Bless* the *God* and *Father* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who often leaves *Men* with high *Notions* (having too much light of their own) in the *Dark*: — And *Illuminates* the *Poor* and low-capacitated.

Large Vessels go away empty, while little ones are fill'd — 'till the *Joy* of *God* overflows.

Divine Truth is better understood, as it unfolds it self in the purity of *Mens Hearts* and *Lives*, than in all those subtle *Niceties* into which the curiously *Learned* may lay it forth.

Our *Blessed Saviour*, the great *Master* of it, while *He* was here on *Earth*, did not draw it up into any *System* or
L
Body

Body — neither did *His Disciples* after him.

He would not lay it out to us, in any *Canons* or *Articles*; not being so careful to stock and enrich the World, with *Notions* and *Opinions*, as with true *Piety* and a *God-like* Pattern of Purity, as the best way to thrive in all *Spiritual Understanding*.

His main Scope was to promote an *Holy Life* — He hangs all true acquaintance with *Divinity*, upon the doing *God's Will*, *If any Man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.*

This is that alone, which will make us, as *St. Peter* tells, that we shall not be barren, nor unfruitful in the *Knowledge* of our *Lord* and *Saviour*——

Now, if *Men* had but that genuine *Instinct* and naturalness of *Soul* towards *God*, and all *Divine Things*, which is Essential to, and inseparable from the *New-Birth*, in its most *Infant State*——
If any *Spiritual Sense* and *Savour*——
They wou'd be very slow to pass a
Judg-

Judgment, or pronounce a Sentence upon *Persons* or *Principles*, in *Spiritual* Matters.

St. Paul cautions Us, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. To judge nothing before the time, until the *Lord* come — *Who* has no where so deputed this *Office* and *Work* to any *Person*, or *Company* of *Persons*, as to alienate the *Dignity* and *Glory* of it from *Himself*.

Whosoever then *Persecutes* or troubles the *Spiritual Believers* in *Christ*, neither knows *Christ*, nor the true *Christians*, 1 *John* 3. 1. *Therefore the World knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

There is nothing more speaks the absence of *Christ* and his *Spirit*, than that hasty, rash, bold *Fulging* and *Censuring* one another, which every where abounds in the present *Christian Churches*.

But on the contrary, what an inward sweetness and deliciousness is there in *Divine Truth*, such as no *Sensual, Worldly Mind* can taste or relish.

Therefore *He* that will find *Truth*,
L 2 must

must be a diligent pursuer after it — He must seek it with a *Free* and *Sanctify'd Mind*; and with fervent and constant *Prayer* to the *Blessed Spirit* — so seeking, He shall find; Nay, He shall live in *Truth* and that shall live in him — It shall be like a *Stream of living Waters* — issuing out of his *own Soul*.

He shall drink of the *Waters* of his own *Cistern*, and be satisfied — He shall also find every *Morning*, Heavenly *Manna* lying about his *Soul*, and be fed with it to *Eternal Life*.

Thus being in *Conjunction* with the *Truth*, He will find a feeling *Satisfaction* within, in his own *Soul*.

Then let all the *World* *Dispute* against him.

Oh! Let *Us* labour to *express* the *Love*, the *Life* of our *Blessed Lord* — in *Ours*,

Let us dye to the *World*, before we *Die*: Let us separate our *Souls* from our *Bodies*, and all bodily things, before the
time

time of our Separation comes ——— Least *Death* with all his Terrors shou'd be reveng'd on us, for all our follies and neglect.

I beseech you now, (as my Farewell) let us have a care of the consuming *Fires* of *Contention* and *Anger*: And let us beg to be *Inspir'd* with such a *benign* and *kindly heat*, as may *Warm*, but not *Scorch* our Brethren.

From such a *Temper* of *Mind* will result great *Serenity*, *Quiet* and *Tranquility*.

But without benignity of *Mind*, Christian kindness, and *Charity* — *Truth* it self is in a *Faction*, and *Christ* is drawn into a *Party*.

F I N I S.

The Second *Part* (if it please God) will be a Draught of the *New Creature* in *Christ*, with all his lovely *Features* and *Ornaments*.

Aug 31. 1788

